

## Postscripts by Jack Post

Was it young George Washington who threw the silver dollar across the Potomac? Could be, but this year the citizens of Duxbury will have the chance to throw a quarter million dollars from Powder Point clear to the beach, and there won't be anyone over there to pick them up for us, either. In the town warrant for March, we can choose whether we want to rebuild the wooden bridge to the beach so that it will last five or six years (the maximum, they say;) or whether we want to ante up six times that much for a new "permanent" causeway and steel bridge combination that might completely change the ecology of our marsh and our bay, and leave us too broke to do anything about it.

A nice choice to be faced with, indeed, especially when Duxbury has to pay for the whole business itself. Who else will contribute to a structure that goes nowhere? The State? The Federal government? This is no educational institution for which big brother and uncle will pick up the tab now, and pick your picket for it later. This is cash that we will quite literally have to sink into the marsh, all by ourselves.

One other course of action does remain for us, and it's one that we quite often pursue with a good deal of skill. Simple, too. Just do nothing. For once, this idea makes some sense. The bridge is floating around out there in the bay pretty much free, with the pilings rotted away where they have been consistently under water, attached to each other by the lateral structure of the bridge, but completely free to move up and down as the weight of the traffic flows over the channel section. The thought has been to restrict the bridge to four cars at any one time, a total that is not much more than an educated guess as to how much the bridge can stand, when a failure just might lead to catastrophe.

Given a severe winter storm, or a late summer hurricane, the bridge could easily be blown sideways or tipped over. This happened once, you know, quite a few years back, when everything cost less and traffic was insignificant. With an old donkey engine puffing away all summer, the town drove a series of new piles, and spiked the bridge back together. Except for minor breaks and a few fires, there she has stayed ever since; but now if there is a fire, our Fire Department quite sensibly won't risk their equipment on the structure in its present condition; and, friends, if the wind is howling, or if the cars are lined up solid toward the middle of the span, you had better not, either.

How important is an automobile bridge to the people of Duxbury? Actually, starting from the stop light at the intersection of St. George and Tremont Streets (Rts. 3A and 14, if you prefer numbers,) it would take you 10 to 12 minutes to drive around the north edge of the marsh, through a few hundred yards of Green Harbor and out to the Duxbury parking lot at the end of the bridge. It might take you almost as long if you drove carefully through Millbrook, by the schools, out Powder Point, and over the bridge. From the north or west sections of the town, you probably could make it in almost equal time.

Supposing the bridge were closed to automobile traffic (which it will have to be if anything is to be done,) it could still be used as a foot bridge simply by throwing a barrier across each end. Plenty of people would not mind walking, and the fishermen would love being able to waste their time in peace. The families who wanted to lug the kids, the dog, and a picnic out to the dunes could still do so, and after all what difference does ten minutes make in a whole afternoon at the beach? There would probably be less high flying traffic to bother you when you got there, too.

Without the Powder Point bridge, the beach buggies and the dune destroyers would be more easily controlled since they would all have to come in through the one gate at the north end, and this might very well spell the difference between a beach and no beach at all. Destruction of the grass and the general erosion from the ever greater number of wheeled vehicles speeding down and back has reached crisis proportions. Without nature's protective covering, one violent storm could break the barrier and alter our entire ecology beyond repair.

If the town votes a further survey at the meeting in March, why not close the bridge to automobiles immediately and take the year that an engineering study would require to see how the footbridge idea would work? If at the end of the year the town wants a repaired bridge or a new bridge, it can be voted for and paid for then. If we find having no vehicular bridge works pretty well, we can still use our beach, and it stands in less danger of destruction; then we can go on from there. Meanwhile, we will have saved ourselves quite a few tax dollars, and in these days, that ain't seaweed.

